

Claims

1. An ingress/egress port for an Ethernet switch comprising:

a plurality of MAC interfaces each of which is capable of receiving/transmitting FE packets, at least one of the MAC interfaces further
5 being configurable to receive/transmit GE packets; and

receive and transmit modules which are configurable respectively to receive both GE and FE packets from, and transmit GE and FE packets to, the interfaces.

2. A port according to claim 1 in which only one of the MAC interfaces is
10 configurable to receive/transmit either GE or FE packets, the other MAC interfaces only being adapted to receive/transmit FE packets.

3. A port according to claim 1 or claim 2 in which each MAC interface is associated with a buffer for storing packets as they are received, the receive module being arranged to received packets from the buffers sequentially,
15 whereby the receive module receives the FE packets sequentially even if FE packets actually reach different ones of the MACs simultaneously.

4. A port according to claim 1, claim 2 or claim 3 including 8 MAC interfaces per port.

5. An Ethernet switch including a plurality of ports according to any
20 preceding claim.

6. An Ethernet switch including eight ports according to any of claim 3, each port being switchable between two modes in which it operates respectively as one GE port or eight FE ports, whereby the switch can operate as n GE ports and $8(8-n)$ FE ports for n a selectable integer in the range 0 to
25 8.

7. A method of operating an Ethernet port according to any of claims 1 to 4, the method including applying a control signal to the port to determine whether the interfaces operate as FE interfaces or whether the at least one interface operates as a GE interface.